

**NMAC – GMAC
Fall Meeting 2004
Boise, Idaho**

November 29 – December 1, 2004

Introductions and Ground Rules – Tom Frey

Welcome and Opening Remarks – Don Artley

Don Artley welcomed and thanked the attendees for their participation. The purpose of the meeting is to look back at the year, identify problems and shortcomings, determine and assign action items if applicable, and share and emphasize our success.

Geographic Area Round Robin – All

AK Alaska had a record fire season, with 7 million acres burned, multiple communities threatened, numerous teams and crews mobilized, and utilization of resources (engines and SEATs) not traditionally used. Most fires were confine/contain strategy fires, with minimal impact on urban interface areas. Smoke was a major issue, particularly in Fairbanks. Air Force drones were used, but still could not map the perimeter of the fires. The mayor of the Fairbanks North Star Borough will be appointing a panel of 3 individuals with subpoena power, due to concerns that the city believed it was not receiving all information on the fires. Rather than order an Area Command, AK put together an informal MAC organization due to distance issues, organizational structures, and responsibilities, which worked effectively.

NW Helicopters were used very effectively in the absence of heavy airtankers. Washington's Division of Natural Resources brought in three Cobra helicopters for water drops, which was very successful. There will be two additional Cobras next year, but no infrastructure to support them. The season started early, but also ended early. Washington hosted most of the fires, primarily on the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests. There were two Oregon teams that did not receive an assignment. The MAC was not convened – business was handled by conference calls. A mini-MAC formed with local officials in Chelan County worked well. Area Command was a consideration at one point, but was not used for several reasons, including cost consideration. The PNW would like to thank Lyle Carlile, NMAC liaison, for his support during the season

CA Northern California – The northern portion of the state received good snow packs. The Energy Release Components (ERC) were high, but the area received a good deal of precipitation. Helitankers were used successfully for initial action. Predictive Service products were validated and used by fire managers. The Area supported Wildland Fire Use. The Fire Watch program was very successful. There was moderate team deployment. Contracted base camps for Incident Management Teams (IMT) ("camp in a box") were used and are currently being evaluated for costs, thus far favorably.

Southern California – The 2003 fire season was one of the worst on record. The winter months in 2003-2004 saw only 60% of normal amount of precipitation, setting the stage for another catastrophic season. During the late spring 1,000 hour fuels and ERCs were near record levels. Severity was requested and received from mid-May through October. With the absence of heavy airtankers and the increased use of Type 1 helicopters we were forced to take a strong look at prepositioning resources. Crews, engines, smokejumpers and teams were prepositioned based on the use of Predictive Services products. Those decisions were validated. Initial action efficiency increased statewide to 99%. Statistics on federal fires show that although 2004 saw 97% of the number of fires in 2003, 25% fewer acres burned, which is attributed to increased success in initial action and an early end to the fire season. In 2003 the average fire size was 146 acres – in 2004 it was 23 acres; 2003 – 65 teams, 2004 – 35 teams. Sadly, there were two firefighter fatalities – a state firefighter on a federal fire and an NPS employee on a prescribed burn.

- SW** The Area was still in severe drought, with forests suffering from disease and bug kill. The season was average, although conditions were prime for a much worse season. There was extensive press coverage on the absence of the heavy airtankers and an increased awareness of prevention. A plan was developed for the deployment of single engine airtankers (SEAT) and helicopters, which was effective, but expensive. The Southwest saw support from other Areas at the highest point of our season with aviation assets, crews, engines and overhead. The use of Modular Airborne Firefighting Systems (MAFFS) was effective, with pilots improving as the season progressed, and deployment and coordination working well. There was reluctance at the local level to use MAFFS due to the associated costs. Political pressure from the Governors of Arizona and New Mexico presented a challenge. Management of SEATs became contentious. There were major issues with communications and information technology (IT) not interfacing across firewalls between state and federal agencies on incidents, which hampered operations greatly in a computer dependent environment. On a positive note, the Southwest Area wishes to say thank you for the excellent support received from the NIFC Communications Group during the season.
- RM** The Area held a preseason MAC exercise using past fires, allowing new members to become familiar with the MAC process. In conjunction with that training, agency administrators were invited and briefed on the upcoming season. The Area was able to quickly deliver their regional aviation strategy to NMAC when requested to do so. Monthly GMAC conference calls were conducted, whether necessary or not, which allowed the participants to discuss pertinent issues. The region had two Type 2 incidents early in the season. The moderate season allowed them to support to other Areas and complete fuels treatment projects. Predictive Services products proved to be extremely valuable decision making tools. There was some concern over the commitment of severity helicopter modules for extended periods of time.
- EA** The Eastern Area did not convene their MAC group this season. The Area sent two Type 2 teams to Alaska and SEAT managers to other Areas for support. Fifteen of their T2IA crews were mobilized to the western states. We appreciate the opportunity for Eastern Area personnel to participate on Northern Rockies IMTs. It was a slow fire year, with a decreased number of resource orders.
- NR** The Northern Rockies saw a dry winter and prolonged drought, with record ERCs and 1000 hour fuels. We geared up, anticipating another bad season. The region, other than North Dakota, saw record precipitation in July and August. North Dakota burned the most acres in the Area. Three Type 2 teams were ordered – two were mobilized. Five engines were mobilized to Alaska for an extended assignment. Use of supplemental aviation resources proved to be successful. CL-215s brought on to support State of Montana severity were shared among all the agencies. Timely receipt of severity funding bolstered initial action capability. The thirty-day severity request process works well. There was good coordination with neighboring Geographic Area Coordination Centers (GACCs) and the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC). Concerns are perceived inconsistencies in Interagency Fire Program Management (IFPM) implementation among agencies and dealing with lawsuits resulting from the fires in 2000 on the Bitterroot National Forest.
- GB** The Great Basin started the season in drought, but ultimately ended up with a slightly less severe season than average. The majority of fires occurred on the Sierra Front and in southwestern Utah. Fifty homes were lost on the Sierra Front, and the Cedar City District had 800 fires. This was the first year that the Arizona Strip was incorporated into the southwest Utah fire management organization. The Area hosted a total of 20 teams. The use of smokejumpers, SEATs, and Type 1 helicopters increased, which helped with initial action, but caused some problems. Teams were ordered on some fires due to the complexity of aviation operations. There was a SEAT pilot fatality in southwest Utah. Predictive Services products continue to improve each year and provided decision support in prepositioning resources.

SA The Southern Area had an interesting year. Of 6,000 orders processed, 3,000 were for hurricane response and recovery support. The Area had four major storms in less than 60 days, giving the coordination system a good workout. Sixteen Type 1 teams and all four Area Command teams were used. Utilizing the aviation center at Marietta for staging and briefing was very successful. There were two large fires in Florida early in the season. The absence of heavy airtankers was not an issue in the Area. Understanding the process of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reimbursement presented a challenge. There was unwillingness on the part of some agencies to commit resources prior to a FEMA declaration. 150 agency personnel were ordered and provided to do community relations work. They were to be managed by a FEMA contractor, which did not work out well as oversight and direction was not provided by the contractor. The Southern Area's fire season begins again on January 1.

Aviation Strategy for 2005 – Dave Dash and Pat Norbury

Agencies have found individual funding mechanisms to increase aviation resources – the concept of NMAC aircraft should be put to rest. There will not be an opportunity for additional resources outside of the normal severity request process.

DOI – DOI will not have any heavy airtanker contracts in 2005. They have identified replacements for the four DOI heavy airtankers previously on contract. There will be 3 CL-215s (2 based in Alaska and 1 in Minnesota). They are also working on a call-when-needed (CWN) contract for the CL-215s. In addition, there will be an additional 17 BLM exclusive use SEATs and 2 to 4 BIA SEATs (depending on funding).

Forest Service – As part of the “bridge” strategy, transitioning toward the long-term goal of a modern aviation fleet for wildland firefighting, the Forest Service has contracted for 8 P3s for 2005. Several companies have come forward with proposals to develop operational service life (OSL) limit criteria for the P2Vs and the McDonnell-Douglas planes. If OSLs for those planes are developed, it is possible that the P2Vs and the DCs will be back in service. However, at this point only the 8 P3s are approved for the 2005 season.

Use of Approved State Owned/Contracted Resources – DOI: Request approval through agency to the Office of Aircraft Services. DOI will reissue the guidance for this year. The Forest Service is planning to issue similar guidance prior to fire season. There should be coordination between agency regional/state aviation officers when using state owned-contracted resources.

When developing Geographic Area aviation strategies and preplanning for 2005, two options should be addressed: with and without heavy airtankers.

National Incident Management Organization (NIMO) Update – Mike Dougherty (PowerPoint presentation attached)

Since January 2003 when the NIMO Project was chartered by the National Wildfire Coordination Group (NWCG), several implementation options have been analyzed. Success is predicated on planning and implementing an aggressive landscape scale vegetative management program and the following nine key recommendations.

- Improved capacity and capability – change federal agency policy to require employee support of incident management and develop incident management positive requirements for unit level agency administrators.
- Significantly increase the number of interagency Type 3 IMTs.
- Streamline NWCG fire training and qualifications program to reduce redundancy and more effectively focus on the needs of various positions.
- Improve and standardize legal authorities to allow effective implementation in incident management across all levels of government.
- NMAC would be responsible for the standardization and mobilization of Type 1 and Type 2 IMTs.
- Seek partnerships with other federal agencies (Environmental Protection Agency, Coast Guard, FEMA, etc.) to improve development and utilization of incident management personnel for fire and non-fire incidents.

- Improved hiring authority – reduce dependency on retirees and improve temporary emergency hiring authorities.
- Standardize pay rates, contracts, performance standards and common definitions of inherent government functions.
- Develop a new model for managing complex incidents that utilizes social values, significant resource values and cost/benefits in the decision making process.

Recommended Organization: A permanent incident management organization focused on leadership, safety, cost efficiency and training. An interagency implementation strategy will be required to address specific aspects of this recommendation. Recommend seven teams of seven full time people with no additional standing overhead team members, to be located in Atlanta, Albuquerque, Denver, Salt Lake City, Missoula, Portland, and Sacramento. Team deployment would be managed by NMAC. The teams would be available most of the year and may be supplemented by traditional Type 1 and 2 IMTs. Positions would be time limited, possibly five years. Off season work would include training, quality assurance activities, fuels management, ad-hoc fire and resource management work, NWCG issues, cost containment, and leadership development. After being monitored and evaluated for five years, the number of teams could be increased or the concept abandoned altogether. The estimated cost for the teams is \$7,400,000 based on the following:

- Seven teams with seven members
- Incident Commander calculated at the GS-14/15 level
- Command and General Staff calculated at the GS-13/5 level
- Overhead rates estimate 30%
- Transfer of station is not included

None of the organization alternatives analyzed were affordable based on current funding levels or reduced the reliance on the agency militia. However, the NIMO team determined that hiring and developing a small number of employees with large incident management as their primary responsibility would result in significant benefits if implemented along with the nine key recommendations presented above. The NIMO group will present this recommendation to NWCG at their January meeting.

Action Item: Forward comments on the recommended NIMO organization to Tom Harbour (tharbour@fs.fed.us).

Date Due: December 31, 2004

Responsible: All interested in commenting.

Narrowband Implementation – Steve Jenkins

In 1959, band width was 100 kHz with 120 channels – in 2005 the width will be 12.5 kHz with 960 channels. In 1992 Congress mandated that all federal agencies be narrowband by January 1, 2005. Forest Service will be 100% narrowband by January 1, FWS is 80-90% narrowband capable and BLM is 85-90%. NPS might not be narrow band capable until 2008. They can still operate in the wideband mode, but if they interfere with a narrowband operation, the wideband has to shut down.

Some potential issues/discussion points are:

- There should be no problem on Type 1 and 2 fires – the problems will be on initial action.
- Most performance problems are maintenance or tuning related.
- Wideband radios are over-modulated and distorted, which can be solved by how the radio is held.
- States that have purchased radios from vendors on the federal contract and there is a good chance that those radios are narrowband capable.
- In the year 2018 state agencies are required to be narrowband capable – the more progressive states are already moving that way.
- P-25 (digital) will double the frequencies to 1920 channels.
- Initial action plans should be designed to take into account the radio capabilities of all cooperators.
- States could be asked to put some frequencies into a zone.

- Some partners are going to 800 MHz, which works well in an urban environment but not in the forest.
- Narrowbanding does not require more repeaters.

Action Item: NMAC will release a one-page paper (drafted by Steve Jenkins) for educational purposes, highlighting radio issues and offering suggestions/solutions for operation.

Date Due: None stated.

Responsible: NMAC and Steve Jenkins

Incident Business Management – Hallie Locklear (PowerPoint presentation attached)

The Incident Business Practices Working Team (IBPWT) held a Business Practices workshop in 2004 with 100 participants. The following seven task groups were formed. Their charters and progress reports are posted on the NWCG IBPWT web page.

- Interagency Incident Hiring Alternatives
- EERA Forms
- Vehicle Rental
- Incident Business Advisors (IBA)
- Fuel and Oil
- Contract Administration/COTR
- Team Financial Summary

AD Pay Plan – the AD Pay Plan has gone beyond the original intent – to hire and pay temporary workers in emergency situations. In 2003 a task group was chartered to classify (level) the most common AD positions to ensure they are in the appropriate pay category. In 2004, two additional task groups were established to: 1) develop rates for each of the classified positions or group of positions and 2) review and make changes to improve and clarify language. The proposed Pay Plan has the following provisions and is expected to be signed in January 2005:

- Requires the use of standard rates for positions established by the IBPWT for commonly used positions
- Requires approval of rates for positions not established in the Pay Plan.
- Removes provision which allows Geographic Areas to assign rates and instructs the Areas to furnish documentation to the IBPWT to establish the rate for the position on a nationwide basis
- Established new pay classes from AD-A to AD-M and associated rates and removes the direction of former AD-4 and AD-5 position rates
- Changes direction to be consistent at all pay levels where a casual's pay will be set at the point of hire and will not change based upon the location of the incident.
- Clarifies that the hiring of casuals for annual refresher courses, GACG-sponsored team meetings, and travel to and from training is included within the 80-hour training limit, regardless of agency.
- Removes the provision for up to 120 hours of training for specialized positions when state or federal licensing and/or certification requirements exist.
- Clarifies that if a casual attends over 80 hours of training they will not be compensated.
- Adds authority to hire casuals to meet mission assignments issued by FEMA.
- Deletes provision for paying the rate at point of hire or the rate at the location of the incident, whichever is higher.
- Deletes provision to process casual payments at demobilization site.
- Removes referent to the IIBMh 12.2 – 12.6 and inserts the applicable provision in the Pay Plan.
- Adds clarification on when a casual is compensated for meal breaks and travel interruptions.
- Removes reference to R&R and clarifies that casuals are guaranteed 8 hours per day when working away from their point of hire.
- Incorporates language from the IIBMh, section 12.6 on compensable meal periods.
- Adds advising agencies to adhere to their policy on hiring of relatives as casuals.
- Changes the way positions are classified and rates are established.
- Simplifies the rate for a casual working as a trainee to be paid at one rate lower than the full performance rates.

- Develops a uniform pay rate of an AD-A for training, regardless of the casual's qualifications.
- Deletes authorizing agency administrators to equate positions to benchmark jobs and adds information on how positions are classified.
- Deletes positions from the Incident Position Matrix that did not have adequate documentation to be included in the classification process.

Another task group is looking at other alternative hiring authorities. Their first report is due in January 2005.

A task group was established to look at the current OF-288 to determine if there is a need to modify the form. They will coordinate with other working groups. Their draft form and/or other recommendations are due in May 2005.

Other work in progress is revision/improvement of the IBPWT web pages to meet the needs of the target audience and development of Chapter 90, IIBMH, to address all risk management.

Action Item: Federal agencies – Forward comments/concerns directly to Hallie Locklear or your IBPWT representative, unless your agency has issued specific direction on the comment process. States should forward their comments directly to Paul Palmiotto (palmiop@doacs.state.fl.us) or Steve Hasenorhl (steve.hasenorhl@state.sd.us).

Date Due: December 17, 2004

Responsible: All interested in commenting.

Interagency Fire Program Management (IFPM) – Sean Hart, Phil Street

Interagency Fire Program Management is a plan that went into effect on October 1, 2004, to raise the standards for 14 key fire positions. There is a five year timeline for personnel in encumbered positions to become qualified. NMAC has discussed this in terms of getting personnel qualified and how to maximize the use of trainees on fires.

Line officers will play a big part in the use of trainees – cost will be an issue. They need to understand that they have a vested interest in supporting trainees. The GACCs can maintain priority trainee lists and ensure that trainees are paired with mentors. States can help, and will probably accept trainees if the federal agencies pay the increased cost, which may be from program dollars. On a national level we can communicate to line officers the need to provide training opportunities.

Action Item: NMAC will strengthen the language in their strategy document to stress the importance of training assignment opportunities.

Date Due: 2005 NMAC Preparedness Strategy

Responsible: NMAC

Action Item: Sean Hart is drafting an issue paper on IFPM and the use of trainees to present to the Eastern Area Coordination Group. He will forward a copy to the NMAC and GMAC chairs.

Date Due: December 31, 2004

Responsible: Sean Hart

Action Item: This issue should be on the agenda at each Geographic Area's preseason meeting.

Date Due: Geographic Area preseason meetings.

Responsible: GMACs

Standard Predictive Services Products, GACC Web Sites – Rick Ochoa, Tom Wordell (PowerPoint presentation attached)

Program goals of the National Predictive Services Group (NPSG)

- Develop/implement a user assessment process so that user needs are understood and defined.
- Identify and implement standardized products and services that satisfy user needs.
- Determine organization, resource and programmatic requirements.

- Develop and implement performance standards for products and services.
- Enhance the interaction between Predictive Services functions.
- Establish method for communicating information between Predictive Services internally and externally.
- Improve the data infrastructure that supports and facilitates the integration of Predictive Services and the Wildland Fire Program.
- Implement methods to assess and improve the products and services provided by Predictive Services.

Standardization of Predictive Services products will:

- Increase efficiency and usability
- Provide products that are consistent and familiar for out of area personnel and IMTs
- Save money and time – work and improvements can be shared at all GACCs
- Lead to better products, better decisions and better safety.

Examples of daily and weekly outlooks were presented. The NPSG proposes to create a standard daily product that covers days 1 – 7 (issued in the morning), that utilizes tabular and graphical formats and includes weather, fire potential, and resources, to be implemented by June 2006. The weekly outlook would be eliminated. GACCs are free to develop any additional products of their own.

GACC Web Sites – There is no consistent format, look, or feel to the web sites, and products have different names and are located in different places. Searching for products is confusing and results in wasted time. The GACC web task group has received direction from the NPSG and Center Managers to create a standard GACC template and centralized server. Jay Ellington is the chair of the web task group. The FAMWEB server is available to all GACCs, but is not required to be used. Access to all GACCs would be through www.gacc.nifc.gov. The GACC template can be found at www.fs.fed.us/r3/fire/national_web. The 2005 implementation timeline for the GACC web sites is as follows:

- January – distribute implementation guidelines.
- February 1 – post national web site
- May 1 – Post GACC sites.

Resource Ordering Status System (ROSS) Update – Kim Christensen

ROSS challenges from last fire season were sluggish response time and system downtime. The problems were determined to be with agency servers and not ROSS. We have made strides in working with agency IT personnel to quickly determine what IT network is involved and have developed better monitoring.

Training and implementation of ROSS is occurring in California in 2005. They have hired a full time ROSS coordinator.

2005 funding has been received for an enhanced ROSS/IQCS interface, and enhanced contracts/agreement and tactical aviation modules.

The 2006 funding request includes a hot site for replication, a generic system interface to permit exchange of data with ROSS and other systems, and development of a compact module.

How ROSS statuses resources in terms of IQCS has been problematic. The system can be queried for an available dispatch recorder. However, other qualifications of the individuals do not show on the screen. A request will be presented to the change management board to explore different ways to view the information, perhaps with a toggle switch. It is not clear if additional funding would be required to make this change.

The Forest Service is centralizing their IT operations in the Southwest with fewer servers available. This could be an issue.

California has a need at the local level to integrate ROSS with Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) systems (probably funded in 2006).

Alaska Length of Assignment – Charlie Sink

Cost of mobilizing teams and crews to Alaska, and the fact that the estimated effective length of management is 10 days, 7 days in remote areas, is of concern.

This issue was presented to NWCG in October and discussed at length. While cost is a concern, it is important to send a consistent message on length of assignment. Assignment extensions can be requested on an incident by incident basis. The decision by NWCG was to keep the policy intact, and modify the language in the National Mob Guide to identify the potential for extension of assignment in Alaska.

Action Item: Language in the National Mobilization Guide will be modified to address potential extension of assignments in Alaska.

Date Due: None

Responsible: GMACs

Fire Use Management Teams (FUMT) – Sheldon Wimmer and Dick Bahr

Fire Use Management Team (FUMT) issues identified by the Interagency Fuels Coordination Group are:

- Number of Fire Use Management Teams
- Oversight and management
- Team configuration
- Rotation schedule
- Use of teams on confine/containment and limited suppression actions
- Dispatch issues

Season overview – Team oversight and management was migrated to the GMACs for the 2004 field season. The Geographic Areas are responsible for team supervision, filling vacant positions, and team member rotations. If an Area is unable to fill a core team position they will coordinate with other Geographic Areas to fill those positions and assign a trainee within their Area.

Teams consist of 10 positions when dispatched outside of their Geographic Area, 7 core positions and 3 positions to be determined after discussion with the ordering unit. Trainees will be additional to the 10 positions and will be negotiated with the ordering unit, with priority given to local and adjoining unit personnel. Up to 4 of the 7 core positions could be shared positions.

In 2004 there were 6 FUMTs (CA – 1, GB – 1, NR – 2, RM – 1, SW – 1). (There was to have been a 7th team, but the team was unable to obtain a full compliment of core positions and was disbanded early in the season.) Each of the teams had 4 or more assignments, which translated to more than 50 days out for each team. Two teams were assigned in Alaska for 21 days. A goal is to fill that 7th team this year, and solicit a Geographic Area to commit to developing an 8th team, so that teams could average 3 assignments per season.

Requesting units are required to submit a rationale prior to mobilization of a FUMT. Rationale was received in only 4 out of 35 requests. In some cases, 3 or 4 individual resource to supplement the local resources would have been more appropriate than ordering a FUMT.

There was a weekly FUMT IC call, but there was not consistent participation from all Geographic Areas.

The National Fuels Coordination Group has stopped supporting equipment at the national level (i.e., computers, GPS, digital cameras, etc). They are in the process of property transfer to the Geographic Areas.

Key trainee positions are Long-Term Fire Behavior, Logistics, and Incident Commander/Fire Use Manager. The Geographic Areas could work together to recruit for positions with a single recruitment announcement and a coordinated selection process.

It is time to look at realignment of the teams so that personnel in core positions are on a team within their Geographic Area if possible. The teams are willing to realign.

“Ownership” and team management will remain at the Geographic Area level. If a Geographic Area has a FUMT available, they may be assigned within their Area. The National Interagency Fuels Coordination Group will act in a facilitative role.

Action Item: NMAC will issue a letter outlining how FUMTs will operate in 2005, and emphasizing that management of teams is at the Geographic Area level.

Date Due: Prior to fire season

Responsible: NMAC

Action Item: The National Interagency Fuels Coordination Group will facilitate discussion of possible realignment of FUMT personnel with the Geographic Area Coordination Groups and the FUMT Incident Commanders.

Date Due: Prior to fire season

Responsible: Dick Bahr, Tim Sexton

Effective Use of Area Command Teams – Don Artley

Use of Area Command Teams has increased since 2000. Some local agency administrators have expressed concern that Area Command Teams take away their responsibility for jurisdiction. They are comfortable with Incident Management Teams, but are less comfortable signing a delegation of authority to Area Command. This may be due to lack of understanding on the role of Area Command.

There is also some misunderstanding as to who the Area Command Teams answer to. They are managed administratively by NMAC, but once they are mobilized to an area they are accountable to the GMAC. The roles need to be more clearly defined.

A discussion on branching teams versus ordering another team was held. Agency administrators in some areas are opposed to branching – it exacerbates their concerns of being too distant from the AC. However, in some instances it makes sense to branch rather than order another AC team, depending on how many fires and where they are located. There needs to be good dialogue regarding workload between the teams, GACCs, and agency administrators. Preseason is the time to make contact with agency administrators regarding roles and responsibilities for AC teams.

As a side discussion – with the evolving roles of MACs it may be time to consider revision to MAC training.

Action Item: Clarify and strengthen the language in the NMAC strategy document to emphasize Area Command Teams accountability to the GMACs. Add an executive summary to highlight all changes in the 2005 Preparedness Strategy.

Date Due: Prior to fire season

Responsible: NMAC

IMT Size – Sue Vap

The increasing size of incident management teams is causing some concern. There was an order placed for 107 people on one IMT order this year. We have an obligation to scrutinize team size. There are times when a short team is appropriate. The GMACs need to be involved in negotiations for additional team members, rather than the IC going directly to the agency administrator or fire management officer. Are some of these positions essential or just convenient to order with the team – could some of the personnel be provided at the local level? IFPM will have implications on carrying additional trainees on

teams. On the other hand, there are cost containment issues to be addressed. We have a standard for team size for national mobilization in the National Mobilization Guide (NMG), but if it is treated as optional and is not enforced, it is no longer a standard.

There was agreement that IMT size as written in the NMG is appropriate, and negotiating for additional resources will not be done until after the arrival of the team at the incident, and will come from the closest available forces.

Action Item: NMAC will issue a memorandum to the GMACs, stating the need to enforce the standard as written in the NMG.

Due Date: Prior to fire season

Responsible: NMAC

Action Item: Ensure that team size is discussed at the upcoming Center Managers/Coordinators meeting and the national AC/IC meeting.

Due Date: Scheduled meeting dates

Responsible: Kim Christensen

IMT Web Site Management Protocols – Sue Vap

There is a need to be consistent on how much information is posted on IMT web sites and how that information is displayed. Region 5 has developed a template for a standard format that allows for easy posting of information – there are issues of cost and the development of standard protocols yet to be done. From the Area Command point of view, web pages allow for more efficient exchange of information.

Action Item: NMAC will continue to pursue standardized IMT web sites.

Date Due: Ongoing

Responsible: NMAC, Sheldon Wimmer

Mobilization Timeframes – Sheldon Wimmer

Many times it takes 36 hours to mobilize a team to an incident, which is a safety issue. However, cost is an issue when the option of flying is considered. The coordination system is responsible for determining how best to get the team to the incident, not the team. This is an awareness issue that presents management challenges.

Agency Firewalls – Web Site Access – Greg Jensen

Agency firewalls and IT security systems prevent interagency personnel from accessing necessary information when using another agency's computers. John Gebhard, BLM IRM Chief at NIFC, was to have presented this agenda item, but was called for jury duty.

Action Item: NMAC to task John Gebhard to draft issue paper with recommendations to forward to WFLC and agency CIOs.

Date Due: None stated.

Responsible: NMAC, John Gebhard

Cross Billing for Support to Other Federal Agency Partners, and Cache Support for Prescribed Fire and Type 3 Incidents – Alice Forbes

Forest Service – The Chief has decided not to hold a pool of funds for assistance at the national level. Each Region has the option of holding a pool at the Regional level, but thus far the Regional Foresters have chosen not to do so. Region 2 has an issue paper proposing the establishment of reimbursable accounts. Each area will have to determine at a local level how, and if, they will provide assistance to other agencies (i.e., interagency agreement).

DOI – The Interior agencies have agreed that they will track the amounts of funds expended for fuels treatment projects and make adjustments between agencies at the national level. BLM issued specific guidance at the beginning of FY 2005 (IM OF&A No. 2004-032) indicating that assistance to other

agencies at the local level (adjoining units) may be approved by the local BLM Fire Management Officer. Assistance outside the local level or outside the geographic area must be approved by the State Fire Management Office or State Fuels Management Specialist. It is the responsibility of the state office to ensure that assistance provided to an agency (beyond local level assistance) is on an equitable basis, or that the appropriate interagency agreement is in place.

Cache Support for Prescribed Fire – The Forest Service caches do not have a mechanism to support the fuels/prescribed fire projects of other agencies. Caches do have the authority to establish reimbursable accounts to bill through interagency agreements. Contact Tory Henderson (thenderson@fs.fed.us) with specific issues regarding Forest Service cache support of prescribed fire.

Cache Support for Type 3 Incidents – Type 3 incidents have been ordering the base incident van, using only a few items, and then sending the van back. This is a very costly use of the van. The NFES Kit Committee has been tasked with developing a Type 3 kit with its own NFES number, using existing cache stock items

In summary, the issue of how to provide assistance for hazardous fuels reduction to our partners is ongoing. Helping each other on fuels projects is key to qualifying our personnel.

Mobilization Priorities – Maintaining Experience and Qualifications – Kim Christensen (PowerPoint presentation attached)

As a result of last year's NMAC-GMAC meeting, language was placed in the 2004 National Preparedness Strategy stating that emphasis will be placed on maintaining proficient and highly qualified agency and agency cooperator resources. Mobilization priorities will be adjusted as appropriate to ensure that experience goals are attained.

Crew requests for 2004 (crew requests were down 80% from 2003)

- 616 total crew requests processed
- 446 crew requests filled
- 300 T-1 crew requests filled
- 66 T-2 IA crew requests filled
- 80 T-2 crew requests filled
- CX: T-1 – 103, T-2 IA – 13, T-2 – 12
- UTF: T-1 - 42

Requests for self sufficient crews (credit card travel/purchasing authority) is based on local dispatch staffing and capability to provide support. Every attempt is made to equalize assignment opportunities.

Other Discussion Topics – All

AD/Cooperator Payments – With the centralization of payment centers there is concern about the timeliness of payments to ADs and cooperators. There will be an overlap/parallel system in place for a few months to ensure that there are no delays in payments.

FEMA Reimbursement for Hurricane Assistance – Some timelines for submitting bills will be set. If requests for reimbursement are not submitted within that timeframe they will not be paid. If you have received a denial for payment, refer it back to the Forest Service so that it can be appealed. Make sure that task orders are as specific as possible (i.e., equipment) and have a copy of the task order before mobilizing.

Liability Issue – If you are operating within the scope of your job and the parameters that your agency has described, it does not amount to criminal liability. Forest Service Region 4 is developing talking points with regard to the Cramer incident and a letter will be issued from the Forest Service Chief. The talking points should be issued on December 3 – Alice Forbes will forward a copy to NMAC and GMACs.

Closing Remarks/Wrap-up – Don Artley

Meeting face to face provides us an opportunity for productive interaction. The measure of success of this meeting is how well we follow up on action items. GMACs are encouraged to stay in contact with their NMAC liaisons – liaisons will remain the same for 2005. Please remember that we are nationally and internationally recognized for our ability to get things done. Thank you for your participation.